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State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011 - Russia

The extent of radical nationalism and a steady rise in ethnicity-based violence continued to be a cause of concern throughout 2010. According to data from the Moscow-based SOVA Centre for Information and Analysis, 37 people were killed and 368 injured in racially motivated attacks in 2010. The capital Moscow and the surrounding *oblast* saw the most violence, but incidents occurred in other cities across Russia, including St Petersburg and the surrounding Leningrad *oblast*, in Krasnodar, Nizhny Novgorod and in Rostov-on-Don.

An ultra-nationalist rampage in Moscow in the last month of the year caused an upsurge in xenophobic violence, resulting in the deaths of two people, and a further 68 sustaining injuries, according to SOVA. On 11 December, a group of ultra-right extremists gathered at Manezh Square in Moscow to commemorate the death of a football fan, Egor Sviridov, who allegedly had been killed by people from the North Caucasus a few days earlier. The demonstration, where 'Sieg Heil' salutes were exchanged and xenophobic slogans like 'Russia for Russians', 'Moscow for Muscovites' and 'Kill, Kill' were chanted, ended in violent clashes with the police. Violence continued in the following days, targeting people from the North Caucasus. According to the *Moscow Times*, President Dmitry Medvedev described the rioting and violence as 'pogroms' and called for the prosecution of those responsible. According to a poll quoted by the media outlet, nationalism has gained a strong foothold amongst ethnic Russians, 56 per cent of whom support the ideology of a 'Russia for Russians'. Nonetheless, a counter-demonstration, 'Moscow for All', was organized after the rampage, and was attended by up to 2,500 people.

Another event that attracted headlines in the country was the murder of Federal Judge Eduard Chuvashov, who was shot dead in front of his home on 12 April. Chuvashov had received death threats on a number of occasions, as a result of his strict judgments against ultra-nationalists. Chuvashov conducted a number of trials on racially motivated crimes. This included one in February involving 9 people from the neo-Nazi group 'White Wolves', who were found guilty of murdering 11 people from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. A week before his death, Chuvashov had ruled in a case against Artur Ryno and Pavel Skachevsky (both minors), and Roman Kuzin, who received 10 years (the maximum penalty permitted for minors) and 22 years in prison respectively for committing 20 murders and attempting 12 murders of people of non-Slavic appearance. The group frequently uploaded video-footage of their activities onto the internet. An investigation into Chuvashov's death is ongoing.

Although comprehensive figures on hate crimes and violent attacks with xenophobic or racist motives are hard to establish, according to SOVA, 82 convictions were made and 283 people were sentenced in 2010 in cases involving violence with ethnic hatred as a motive. Fifty-two trials were conducted against 62 people on charges of incitement to hatred, and 4 charges were issued for the distribution of xenophobic propaganda. SOVA

also published a report on the inappropriate enforcement of anti-extremist legislation during 2010. Incidents of racial violence are officially identified as 'extremist crimes' that threaten the security of the country. A Federal List of Extremist Materials and a separate one for extremist organizations are maintained and updated every year. In 2010, the list of extremist materials grew from 467 to 748, and the list of extremist organizations, which are banned from carrying out any activity, included 18 organizations by year's end. SOVA notes that anti-extremist legislation continues to be misused, including the 'criminal and administrative prosecution of Muslims and followers of new religious groups including Scientologists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and followers of Said Nursi'.

In January, Russia ratified Protocol 14 to the ECHR, which paves the way to improve the efficiency of the Court. The Council of Europe welcomed the decision of the Russian parliament, the Duma; Russia was the last of the 47 member states to vote for the ratification of Protocol 14. Russia's Constitutional Court remained critical, however, of its Strasbourg counterpart, and issued statements about withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the ECtHR and introducing mechanisms to allow national authorities not to implement its judgments. The ECtHR has found Russia in violation of human rights in a series of cases in recent years. In November 2010, the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights issued its report on the implementation of judgements of the ECtHR and found that 'extremely worrying delays in implementation have arisen' in Russia. Key concerns relate to 'chronic non-enforcement of domestic judicial decisions' and 'death and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials, and a lack of effective investigations thereof', as well as 'repetitive grave human rights violations' in the Chechen Republic.

Chechnya is a semi-autonomous republic within the Russian Federation, governed by Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, who is directly appointed by the Kremlin. Although freedom of dress is guaranteed to all women in the Russian Federation, including those in Chechnya, and is enshrined in Russian law as part of the constitutional right to freedom of conscience, recent years have seen increasing harassment and discrimination against those who do not follow the publicly enforced dress code in Chechnya. Women and girls who choose not to wear a headscarf are banned from working in the public sector and from attending schools and universities. In June, a young woman was hospitalized following a paintball attack on the street, which occurred because she had not been wearing a headscarf. HRW quoted an interview with Kadyrov with the television station Grozny on 3 July, in which he expressed his 'unambiguous approval of this lawless practice by professing his readiness to "award commendation" to the men engaged in these activities'. Kadyrov went on to say that 'the targeted women's behaviour deserved this treatment and that they should be ashamed to the point of "disappearing from the face of the earth".'

Stressing ethnic minority women's particular vulnerability, and especially Chechens, Roma and women of African origin, the CEDAW committee called on Russia to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, paying special attention to the needs of ethnic minority women. Multiple forms of discrimination experienced by 'certain groups of women and girls, including female domestic workers, asylum-seeking women, refugee women, internally displaced women, and girls living in the street', as well as violence, police harassment and discrimination against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, were highlighted as particular concerns. In their alternative reports to the CEDAW committee, Amnesty International, the Russian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Network and the ANNA National Centre for the Prevention of Violence voiced their dismay at Russia's non-compliance with its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The ANNA Centre drew attention to the continued practices of bride kidnapping and so-called 'honour' killings in some regions of the country, particularly the North Caucasus. Due to the lack of any official statistics on these crimes, the 2010 ANNA Centre submission to the CEDAW committee refers to NGO figures from 2008 that estimated the numbers of bride kidnappings in Dagestan at 180, but such crimes are committed in other parts of Russia and figures could reach several thousand every year. 'Honour' killings were also identified in Dagestan and Chechnya, although, again, the prevalence of this crime is very difficult to establish. The submission refers to dozens of women a year being victims of 'honour' killings in the whole country, and warns that perpetrators are often exempt from punishment as these crimes are most commonly covered up or reported as accidents.

Russia's Third State Report on the Implementation of the FCNM, submitted on 9 April 2010 states that, as regards anti-discrimination measures, which was a key concern raised by the CEDAW committee, no specific laws have been enacted. Instead, the report refers to legislation in the fields of education, labour, health care, judicial procedures, social protection and culture, including measures to protect human rights. In the field of extremist crimes, the report refers to the country's Constitution, which guarantees the rights of national and ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, and to the Criminal Code, which rules out terrorism and extremist activities. It states that 'investigation and proper classification of extremist crimes has been gained, including hate crimes'.

Russia signed the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages on 10 May 2001; however, the process of ratification is proving to be complex and drawn out. In September 2010, the Council of Europe reported on a series of events due to start in October 2010, working towards the Charter implementation in the 'Minorities in Russia' Joint Programme. This includes awareness-raising activities with the participation of local and regional officers, NGOs, and federal judicial authorities, with a view to working towards ratification.

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